

DEDICATION

JOHN L. STROTHER

This volume of *Madroño* is dedicated to Dr. John L. Strother. Born in Conroe, Texas, 1941, he earned a B.S. at Sam Houston State College, a Master's at Washington University in St. Louis, and his Ph.D. in 1967 at the University of Texas, Austin, under the direction of Dr. Billie Turner. His dissertation was a systematic study of the tagetaean genus *Dyssodia*, and he remains an avid synantherologist to this day. Upon receiving his doctorate, John accepted a staff position at the University of California Herbarium, the place he still calls home. He has served as its "Deputy Director" on various occasions.

John's research focuses on composite taxonomy, with an occasional dalliance into other families. During his professional career he has authored nearly 90 scientific articles, over 140 generic treatments of Compositae for *Flora North America North of Mexico*, and an assortment of other contributions to taxonomic resources, including the *Flora of Chiapas*, *The Jepson Manual*, and *Tarweeds & Silverswords*. He loves his research, especially that relating to arcane nomenclatural details that most systematists abhor. He possesses a broad overview of what good monography ought to be, especially that of a classical nature.

John is widely known for being a lover of the English language and having a penchant for grammatical accuracy, word use, and, what else, the use of commas, colons, and periods (he is likely to edit this dedication). His cleverness with words extends into botanical nomenclature, coining an array of generic names that can best be described as entertaining: *Complaya* (the beach composite), *Elaphandra* (named for Dr. Ron Hartman—elaphos is a Greek word for a stag), *Wamalchitamia* (coined after the Tzeltal name for Dr. Dennis Breedlove), *Jefeá* (named for his mentor, Billie Turner), *Oblivia* (purportedly an anagram of Bolivia, the source of the type material), and probably his best known coining, *Damnaxanthodium* (it should be obvious that this is a genus of yellow flowered composites). And there is *Zyzyxia*, a name "arbitrarily formed."

John's editorial skills were put to good use when he assumed co-editorship of *Madroño*, along with his UC Herbarium colleague Alan Smith. John later served as editor of *Systematic Botany*, and he continues to serve as an editor for the *Flora North America* project. His former mentor, Professor Turner, writes about John: "*Honest, direct, forceful, hardly a tactful bone in his sternum.*" I (Patterson) recall reading a Strother review where he commented on the author's written abstract: "*This is merely a description of contents. I should like to see an abstract.*" Yet, as an editor that rare *tactful bone* would appear, as he often returned a review of a marginally acceptable manuscript with the comment to "*give the author an opportunity to make the needed corrections.*" John always treated authors with respect.

John has also been, at times, a taxonomic activist. His publications include insightful critiques and commentaries on issues of nomenclature and classification, and

invitations to his fellow plant taxonomists to speak out and be heard, or in today's parlance, *to represent*.

John's position at UC did not require him to teach classes, but he would offer the occasional seminar in nomenclature and give almost yearly lectures in courses on plant systematics. He is a natural teacher, articulate and precise in explanations, witty, and encouraging. He has co-taught many Jepson Herbarium workshops on the Sunflower family with his colleague, Bruce Baldwin. For many years John taught the Compositae to the plant taxonomy class at SFSU (eventually he considered Patterson adequately competent to give the lecture and save himself a trip).

Some time in the late 1980's John developed a passion outside of botany, for fountain pens. He approached this passion as a taxonomist would, cataloguing them, studying their history and their morphology. This fascination (and perhaps this is not a strong enough word—*man*, he likes them!) led him to amass thousands of pens, to frequent pen shows around the country, buying, selling, trading, even repairing. I (Patterson) have made two long road trips with John to botanical meetings, and both were punctuated with numerous stops at antique malls to assess their fountain pen stock.

John is known for his generosity with his time. When asked about matters of nomenclature (he is an astute student of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature) or to assist with identification of a plant, he is usually willing to put on hold what he is doing to help. More often than not he ends up ferreting



out more details than the original questioner had in mind.

John is known by many for his to-the-point delivery and economy of verbiage. If asked how he is doing, he will likely answer, "Well." His business card for years reads: STROTHER—BERKELEY. John is also quite an epicure, an aficionado of artisanal brews, and a guy who prefers to pour his own—woe betide the waitperson who gets this wrong.

So let us end this dedication in Strotherian style: *Blue Skies, John.*

Bob Patterson
Professor of Biology
San Francisco State University

Alan Smith
University Herbarium
University of California, Berkeley

with comments from
Dr. Billie L. Turner
Professor Emeritus
University of Texas